

TRAFFIC

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Traffic regulations in Bahrain are much the same as those in force in England and the United States; there is a left hand rule of the road and the speed limit in built up areas is 20 m.p.h. Special care should be taken when driving through towns and villages in Bahrain for in common with other parts of the Arab world pedestrians consider the roads as well as the pavements as their property and behave accordingly. Donkey and cycle riders should also be treated with caution for they are apt to be rather reckless. In case of accidents the Bahrain State Police must be notified immediately, failure to do so is likely to involve the drivers in unnecessary trouble.

To drive in Bahrain it is necessary to hold a valid Bahrain driving licence. These are obtainable at the Traffic Department, Bahrain Police Fort, Manama, at a cost of Rs. 5 p.a. Holders of valid licences of countries adhering to the International Traffic Convention, which include England, the U.S.A. and France and most other countries, will be granted a Bahrain licence on production of their own one. In other cases, drivers are required to take out provisional licences, and after a period of one month may apply at the Traffic Office for a driving test. The usual regulations concerning passengers apply to learner drivers.

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All owners of cars and motor cycles in Bahrain are required to register them annually or semi-annually at the Traffic Office. The fee for a car is Rs: 50 per annum, for motor cycles Rs. 12—8 per annum, both fees can be paid in one or two instalments. Failure to register or re-register cars or motor cycles is liable to involve their owners in pecuniary loss.

For further information about Bahrain traffic laws, car owners are advised to contact the Traffic Office, Bahrain Police Fort, Manama, or phone Manama 334.

BANKS

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There are at present two banks in Bahrain :

The British Bank of the Middle East, Prior Road, Manama ;
The Eastern Bank, Government Road, Manama.

These banks provide the usual facilities and arrange for such matters as foreign currency and the transference of drafts. In addition, there are in Manama and Muharraq a number of money changers who deal in most of the commoner forms of currency and who are willing to change money. Most shops will also oblige in this matter, particularly if offered dollars, but care should be taken that a reasonable rate of exchange is given.

LIQUOR

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Bahrain is a Moslem country and is therefore "dry," but non-Moslem residents have been granted the privilege of being permitted

to buy liquor for their own use. In Awali liquor is sold through the medium of BAPCO, while residents in Manama must apply for a permit to buy liquor from H.B.M.'s Political Agent.

It is a serious offence in Bahrain for a Moslem to be found in possession of liquor, or "under the influence" and it is also illegal for non-Moslems in possession of liquor to give or sell it to Moslems.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

There are in Bahrain a number of private and public hospitals, as well as dentists, doctors and chemists.

For the benefit of the people of Bahrain the State Department of Health maintains a number of medical institutions in various parts of Bahrain. At the western end of Manama is the Naim Hospital for men and women, containing both public and private wards and equipped to deal with all emergencies. This hospital is used by the foreign community, except those employed by BAPCO, as well as by the people of the country. Also in Manama there are isolation hospitals, a mental hospital, a T.B. Sanatorium and the Office of Public Health. There are also State Hospitals in Muharraq and Hedd and dispensaries in the three towns and various villages.

For the use of its employees, both Bahraini and foreign, BAPCO has two hospitals in Awali.

The oldest hospital in Bahrain is that run by the mission of the Dutch Reformed Church of America in Shaikh Isa Road, Manama. This hospital contains both public and private wards. There are also several dentists and doctors practising privately in Manama.

RATES OF POSTAGE

LETTERS		Rs.	As.
INLAND :	Not exceeding 1 oz. or fraction thereof	0	1½
	For each additional oz.	0	1
FOREIGN :			
Seamail :			
	Kuwait, Dubai and Muscat, not exceeding 1 oz. or fraction thereof	0	1½
	For each additional oz.	0	1
	Great Britain and Eire, British Empire and territories under British Mandate, U.S.A. and Egypt, not exceeding 1 oz. or fraction thereof	0	2½
	For each additional oz.	0	1
	All other countries, not exceeding 1 oz. or fraction thereof	0	4
	For each additional oz.	0	2½
Airmail :			
	Europe, per half oz. or fraction thereof	0	6
	Australia, New Zealand, per half oz. or fraction thereof	0	12
	Canada, U.S.A., per half oz. or fraction thereof	1	0
	India, per half oz. or fraction thereof	0	6
	Saudi Arabia, Irak, Cyprus, Dubai, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Syria and Jordan, per half oz. or part thereof	0	3½

674 The following were some of the more serious cases of theft; clothing and money were stolen from people staying in a local hotel in the bazaar, money was stolen from a house in Rafaa and a radio and carpet was stolen from the house of a member of the American Mission. In all these cases the thieves were caught and the stolen property was recovered. In 11 other cases thefts of money, jewellery, wearing apparel, etc., were reported to the Police. In some instances persons were prosecuted for theft, but acquitted and in other cases no evidence was obtained.

Five Pakistanis were prosecuted for "bilking" shop keepers.

674 Fewer persons than in the previous year were convicted for contravention of liquor and
273 drug regulations, this does not, however, indicate any decrease in the habit of drinking which among certain classes is becoming almost universal. Altogether 24 persons were prosecuted for distilling, selling and being in possession of liquor and for dealing in hashish and opium.

548 In one case a Palestinian was found to be in possession of 15 lbs. of opium. There is every
276 reason to believe that an active trade in opium is carried on through Bahrain to the West. It is brought to Bahrain from Persia and India via the Trucial Coast and then conveyed on to ships in the harbour which carry it to Europe or the United States.

731 **Fires.** There were a number of serious fires during the year in which many people lost their barasti houses and their possessions. Most of the fires were caused by pressure stoves or lamps which ignited Saaf (palm branch) houses. There were no cases of arson.

The most serious fire was in the Telegraph area where 75 houses were completely destroyed together with their contents. A very strong wind fanned the fire which was only prevented from spreading over another area of barasti houses by wide roads on three sides of the site. This was one of the worst fires known in Bahrain. It appears to have been caused by an old blind man who knocked over a fire or a lamp in his house which lit the palm branch walls of the building. No lives were lost. In the village of Mahooz 55 houses were destroyed in one fire a few of these houses had mud and stone walls and matting roofs. In other fires, some of them in Manama and some in the villages, 17, 12, 15 and 14 houses were destroyed. In none of these fires was there any loss of life. In a fire in a launch, anchored off Manama, one man lost
[368] his life. More supplies of fire fighting equipment, hose pipe, etc., etc., which had been ordered in England were part of the cargo of a Strick Line ship which caught fire near Sitra and which burned for several days.

AGENCY COURT

RESULT OF PROSECUTIONS IN 1372

No.	Nature of Offences.	No. of Cases.	No. of persons accused.	No. of persons convicted.	No. of persons acquitted.	Remarks.
1	Causing Death by Rash or Negligent Act ..	1 ..	1 ..	1 ..	— ..	
2	Theft ..	1 ..	1 ..	1 ..	— ..	
3	Cheating ..	1 ..	1 ..	1 ..	— ..	
4	Criminal breach of trust ..	2 ..	2 ..	2 ..	— ..	
5	Use of criminal force and assault ..	1 ..	1 ..	— ..	1 ..	
6	Liquor drinking and possession of ..	6 ..	7 ..	6 ..	1 ..	
7	Charas and Opium ..	1 ..	2 ..	1 ..	1 ..	
8	Affray ..	1 ..	3 ..	3 ..	— ..	
		14	18	15	3	

NATIONALITIES :

British ..	1 person
Indian ..	3 persons
Pakistan ..	2 "
Palestine ..	1 "
Transjordan ..	1 person
Iran ..	10 persons
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sult them, they spoke no Arabic, and were regarded by the people of Bahrain as expensive foreign mercenaries; they were useless at ordinary police work, and the Indian Officers and N.C.O.'s caused constant trouble by incessant quarrels and intrigues. The Indians were enlisted for four years, but before this period had expired I began to enlist a force of local men as police, a project which I always strongly advocated. It was from this time that the present force was started, but the final transition was not completed until the end of 1932.

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Crime and Prostitution.

The number of serious crimes which are committed every year in Bahrain is small in comparison to the population, which is thought to be about 150,000. Usually about one or two cases of murder are dealt with by the police during the year, but it is possible that occasional murders take place which are not detected, especially murders of women and newly born children. Although in recent years Bahrain has progressed in many ways, there are still a number of Arabs living in Hedd and Muharraq who consider that they are justified in murdering their female relations if the women bring shame on the family. A few of the very old-fashioned Arabs even consider that because the Government does not ignore such murders it is encouraging immorality. The Kadis, however, although ultra conservative in their outlook, disapprove of men taking the law into their own hands and murdering women who misbehave. In some Arab countries the fear of punishment by death for immorality has a very salutary effect, but Bahrain, although described as an Arab state, has very little in common with real Arab countries. The Baharna, who form about three quarters of the population, are not true Arabs, and the rest of the population includes all the nationalities who live around the Gulf. The only real Arabs in Bahrain are the Khalifah and a few families who came over with them from the mainland and a small number of members of mainland tribes who live almost entirely in Hedd, Muharraq, Budeya, and two or three small villages on the south coast.

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Immorality is undoubtedly increasing, but the increase in prostitution is not due to the Government but is a matter of supply and demand. During the last two years numbers of foreigners earning good pay have come to Bahrain, usually without their families, from Persia, Iraq, and India, and this has undoubtedly caused an increase in prostitution. Venereal disease is rampant, and the proportion of persons suffering from it, especially in ophthalmic forms, is very high. The medical supervision of prostitutes would undoubtedly result in an improvement in the public health. This suggestion was discussed and approved by the Manamah Municipal Council some years ago, but it has not yet been possible to arrange the medical organisation to cope with this matter.

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Most of the criminal cases which are dealt with by the police are cases of theft, assault, and immorality. Several important gangs of thieves have been rounded up during the last ten years. Some of these gangs were well provided with arms and had regular methods of disposing of stolen property in Bahrain or on the mainland. Foreigners, especially Hassawis, form the majority of the criminals. There are a number of inveterate thieves who spend the greater part of their lives in prison. Such persons, on the mainland, would be punished by cutting off of their hands and finally by decapitation. The punishments inflicted by the Bahrain courts are whippings, fines, and imprisonment, but imprisonment to many of these people is no hardship: the work is not hard, they are given better food than they would obtain themselves, and the only real punishment is being deprived of women.

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Drugs and Liquor.

Liquor and drugs, such as opium, are forbidden in Bahrain, but in spite of the severe penalties which are enforced by the Bahrain courts against persons contravening the liquor regulations, the habit of drinking liquor and smoking opium is, in my opinion, steadily increasing. Ten years ago very few people drank liquor, and the smoking of opium was entirely confined to foreigners, Persians, Indians, and Baluchis. To-day many of the younger Arabs have acquired a liking for spirits, partly because they have had opportunities for drinking while travelling abroad, and frequent cases have occurred in which Arabs have been found to be taking opium.

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Opium is smuggled into Bahrain from Persia, usually in native crafts, but sometimes hidden in merchandise on the mail steamers. It varies in quality, most frequently it is in large lumps weighing four or five pounds, but sometimes it is in paper-covered sticks sealed up in bundles. It is very

276 expensive in Bahrain, and successful opium smugglers and retailers make large profits. Opium
439 is easy to hide and lacks the strong smell which frequently leads to the detection of locally made
liquor. In opium cases the police depend mainly on informers, who are usually men who are
themselves concerned in the opium business but who consider that they have not had a fair share
of the profits and so give their friends away. Opium has been discovered hidden in gramophones,
clocks, flour-bins, and in the ceilings of rooms.

● 273 Illicit liquor used to consist entirely of locally distilled arak made from dates. Ten years ago
it was manufactured only by two or three Iraqis and Jews, who were gradually rounded up, but
in about 1930 there was a great increase in arak, and a number of Bahrain subjects took to making
it, probably because it was such a profitable trade. The illicit liquor traffickers displayed great
ingenuity in hiding their stills and their cellars: arak was made in ruined houses, in out-of-the-way
date gardens and in subterranean rooms which still exist in a few old houses which were used in
the past as places for hiding valuables in times of war. Distributors kept bottled supplies of arak
in wells, in false walls, under rubbish heaps, and sometimes under the seats of motor cars. In one
case the police discovered that the municipal lunatic asylum was a distributing centre, and the
keeper and his wife were members of a liquor gang.

About two years ago, after numerous prosecutions, there appeared to be a decrease in the
use of arak, but cases began to occur in which people used methylated spirits as a drink. During
the last year this practice has increased very much, and a concoction consisting of methylated spirits
mixed with eau-de-Cologne is rapidly taking the place of arak. It is probably more injurious to
the health than arak, but it is very popular with women of the town, and apparently a small quantity
causes drunkenness in a short time. Methylated spirit is only sold to reliable dealers, and is mixed
before being sold with a chemical to make it unpalatable; there are no restrictions, however, on
the sale of scent.

The Ruler, the religious leaders, and the majority of the people in Bahrain disapprove very
strongly of drink, but there is a small section of the community which would like the restrictions
on liquor to be removed. The great influx of well-paid foreigners from countries where the sale
of liquor is allowed is the chief reason for the increase of cases against the liquor laws. There is
undoubtedly an occasional leakage of liquor from the Bahrain Petroleum Company, but this is
not sufficiently frequent to have any effect on the liquor question in general. The most effective
way of preventing the increase in drinking is to deal very drastically with any cases which are
proved in the courts.

697 The State Jail.

The jail is in the Fort and consists of a number of cells and a yard. Prisoners are well fed—they usually put on weight during their term of imprisonment—and are provided with clothes. Convicts wear leg-irons, which is a measure to prevent their escape, as they work outside the Fort most of the day. There are no regular warders, but each section of the police takes in turn jail duties; this was found more satisfactory than having a permanent jail staff. Usually there are between twenty and thirty convicts in the prison. Debtors receive the same food as prisoners, but wear their own clothes and are not obliged to do any work apart from cleaning the prison. As most of the convicts serve for short terms, it has not been possible to organise any prison industries. There is no women's prison, but there are two cells adjoining the house of the senior police N.C.O., whose wife acts as a wardress if any women are confined in the Fort. The question of a small building for women prisoners is under consideration, and the present jail is also to be repaired during the coming year.

625 The Present Police Force.

Although the existing police force was enlisted locally, the men are not all Bahrain subjects. The present strength of the police is 204 N.C.O.'s and men, including Bahrain Arabs, Shia Baharna, local Persians, and one or two Persians who served in the South Persian Rifles; Kurds, Yemenis, Iraqis, mainland Arabs, Swahilis, Somalis, Sudanese, and a number of manumitted slaves; the last category make very good policemen. In the past, service in the police was regarded as somewhat derogatory, but in the last few years the public attitude towards the police has changed: there is now keen competition to enlist in the force, and when a few recruits are required, hundreds of men present themselves at the Fort for enlistment. It is now possible to take only picked men whose height, chest measure-

361 bazaar, a movie theatre, branches of the Eastern Bank and the Imperial Bank of Persia, a post office, a broadcasting station and a single gas station.

362 Little by little Manama is being modernized and the houses
743 built by the Standard Oil Company for its American and British employees serve as models for the natives in the improvement of their own. There are three hospitals, one operated by the Bahrein Oil Company; a second, for men and women, with a British staff, by the government; and the third by the Arabia Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church in America. However, the facilities of these few establishments are quite limited and even under normal conditions 85% of the population suffers from one or more ailments.

164 The diseases endemic in Bahrein are malaria, the entire
548 group of fevers, dysentery both amoebic and bacillary, bilharzia, trachoma and ankylostomiasis. At the head of the list should go the entire family of venereal diseases. Prostitution, forbidden in Saudi Arabia, has increased greatly under the complacent eyes of the authorities and Bahrein has become a kind of "pleasure island" where thousands of native and foreign employees of the oil companies from Arabia spend their
[273] leaves and money buying cheap pleasure, drinking arak, a 100 proof, colorless distillation of dates, contributing to vice and the propagation of disease.

164 The island is liable to epidemics of plague and cholera. From 1905 to 1911 Bahrein was visited every second year by plague and during the epidemic of 1911, in Manama, Muharraq and adjacent villages alone, more than two thousand persons died. Since World War I international control of plague and more vigorous quarantine measures by the British administration have limited the recurrence of this disease. Since 1920 epidemics of plague have occurred only at five year intervals.

Cholera epidemics are less frequent, probably because the water supply is less open to contamination than formerly. However, last year's epidemic was as serious in Bahrein as in the other ports of the Persian Gulf.

SOCIAL CLASSES AND TENSIONS IN BAHRAIN

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563 In the third place, clerical positions occupied by Indians and other
 578 foreigners are highly coveted by the high-school graduates of Bahrain. This
 554 must be understood within the context of traditional Arab respect for the scribe and the great power wielded until recent times by government employees: clerking represents a social position as well as a source of livelihood.

641 Finally, Indians are given privileges denied to Bahrainis. They are allowed, for instance, a monthly allotment of alcoholic beverages and certain
 273 public places are open to them and to Westerners only. The problem of alcohol is a delicate one in Bahrain. In accordance with Muslim law it is
 563 prohibited to all Muslims. Foreigners and non-Muslims, however, can
 578 obtain a monthly allotment at specified prices through a permit from the British Residency. The only two groups that can benefit from such an arrangement are the Westerners and the Indians, since most other foreigners are Muslims.

563 An example of the resentment felt against the Indian clerks may be
 578 seen in the following letter to the newspaper *al-Qafilah* from an indignant
 191 Bahraini criticizing the Post Office Department:

I came to the post office window with a large number of greeting cards which I wanted to send to friends outside Bahrain. I inquired from the clerk whether there were any special rates? Snatching the cards from my hands, he gave me an answer in a strange language, the only part of which I understood was "three annas and a half."

It is strange that this department continues to employ clerks who do not understand the language of the country. In this connection, I remember that a short time ago I sent my manservant with a piece of paper on which I had written in Arabic the quantity of stamps I wanted of each denomination. Shortly afterwards he came back very angry. He told me that the clerk threw him out of the building and ordered him to "tell [your master] to write in Indian, Persian, or English. . . . We are not Arabs."¹²

609 A factor which also has considerable effect on the attitude of the native toward foreigners is the development of the oil industry in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In Saudi Arabia the political climate has been such that the native is truly master of his house. The moment the foreigner, and particularly the Westerner, steps on Saudi Arabian soil, government officials and civilians alike do not hesitate to remind him in a thousand ways that he is in an independent country, that he is only a temporary guest, and that his sojourn in the country depends on good behavior. The Arabian American Oil Company, as part of its public relations policy, cooperates with the government fully in this respect and it is a well-known fact that a number of its American employees have been sent home for minor infractions of the local law or for being in some way rude to the native inhabitants.

Bahrain is only a few miles away from Saudi Arabia. Stories of how

¹² *al-Qafilah*, January 2, 1953.